Research Plan Proposal

Tentative Title

Parenting in Jane Austen's Novels

For Registration for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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RESEARCH PROBLEM

The novels of Jane Austen deal almost wholly with the restricted circle of family life and around it all social interests are gathered. She worked deftly and wittily and restricted her scope deliberately because her intention was microcosmic: to create a perfectly proportioned small world .There is an extraordinary degree of truth in her pictures of life in the late eighteenth- century England. Each of her novels depicts a group of human beings, their relations with one another and their clashes and affinities. Her novels are too complex to allow a merely didactic interpretation and too serious to be dismissed as simply light-hearted. She contemplates virtues not as fixed quantities or as definable qualities, but as continual struggles, later resolving as progressive states of mind. Her characters are lively and dynamic. She penetrates beneath the surface to the underlying principles of personality and lays bare not only the processes of the characters' mind but also those of the heart.

Families in the late eighteenth- century England mostly operated as economic units and marriage provided ways of securing property and fortune. It was especially important for parents to secure right husbands for their daughters. Otherwise daughters were not provided parental inheritance because of the then prevalent property laws. Jane Austen included flawed parent-child relationships in almost all her novels. The heroines in Jane Austen's novels mature differently under their parents' tutelage. The natural heads of their families are such as have either abdicated their authority like Mr. Bennet and Mr. Woodhouse, or misused it like Sir Walter Elliot, misdirected it like Sir Thomas Bertram, or shirked their responsibility as John Dashwood.

In my study, I intend to analyze the six novels of Jane Austen to explore the far-reaching effects of negative and positive parenting in them.

The main questions that I will thus investigate are: What is the role of parenthood in these six novels of Jane Austen? Are most of the parents in these novels completely permissive or indifferent? Do the protagonist heroines lack self-control and are not able to handle their independence well? Are the parents genuinely aware of their children's happiness, needs and well being? Do the parents adhere to their commitments to ensure that their children choose a proper

path in their lives? Does the discord in marital relations of parents become the cause of the children becoming morally incorrect? Besides evolving a loving and supportive relationship, do the parents encourage their children to build a strong spiritual bond? Do the parents develop in their children the right attitude towards moral values and upright living? Do the children receive the love, care and attention in their formative years? Do the mothers bestow their love and care with a disciplined hand? Does the single biological parent prove to be an inadequate or a careless mentor? Does a child from a humble family background emerge as a more fortunate, strong and a promising individual? To what extent do the surrogate parents justify their roles as able mentors? Does the rich and lavish lifestyle sometimes lead the children to become vain and corrupt?

It is common knowledge that children take after their parents and it would be interesting to see to what extent Jane Austen's heroines do too? In testing my hypothesis, I will examine the role and impact of the parents in *Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, Sense and Sensibility, Emma, Persuasion and Northanger Abbey*, I plan to first understand and interpret family dynamics with special reference to parenthood in these novels.

My approach will include a detailed study of the novels and supplement this with a study of secondary sources.

KEY TERMS

PARENTING: Parenting of an adolescent deals with the biological, cognitive and emotional changes taking place in them. Adolescent's fare best and their parents are happiest when parents can be both encouraging and accepting of child's needs for more psychological independence. Jane Austen includes the element of flawed parenting in all her novels probably to warn her readers against bad parenting. Be it Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice* or Maria and Julia Bertram in *Mansfield Park ,* they take wrong decisions due to their parent's lack of ability to form a genuine responsible relationship with them.

MOTHER: Jane Austen's novels reveals an abundance of absent or ineffectual mothers. Mothers like Mrs. Bennet, Mrs. Price, Mrs. Bertram are unable to provide any sort of role model, guidance or education to their daughters.

FATHER: Jane Austen's novels present fathers who do not add up to an encouraging picture of parenthood. As for example father like Mr. Bennet can be seen as a negligent and detached father. Likewise Mr. Woodhouse is depicted as an affectionate but neurotic and invalid father.

SURROGATE REALTIONSHIPS: A 'Surrogate Mother' is defined as a woman who bears and raises a child for it is deemed that she is the only one fit to be the child's mother. Surrogate Mothers in Jane Austen's fiction play an important role in shaping the heroines destiny. The actual mother was either deceased, not present or just not the right person for the daughter to rely on. Fanny, Emma, Elizabeth and Elinor all struggle because the very people who are supposed to be looking out for them prove to be unhelpful. Thus Austen creates substitute mothers such as Mrs. Gardiner, Lady Russell and Mrs. Norris. Also Mr. Gardiner, Mr. Darcy, Edmund Bertram and George Knightley can also be seen as substitute parents and caretakers.

BACKGROUND

Theories of Parenting during Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Throughout history numerous theorists have contributed to our understanding and knowledge of the different types of parenting styles used within society. One of the major theorists John Locke's book *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* , published in 1693, established the importance of a child's experiences early on in life which significantly alter a child's early development- educating, instructing and moulding their minds and their natural tendencies. Education develops the understanding to which a human being universally pays a ready submission. Thus Locke's method of education is meant to be observed by parents even from the time their child is in the cradle, long before the teaching comes from books.

Unlike Locke, however, Rousseau believed in 'Simplicity Parenting' and proposed that children should also gain most of their education through life experience rather from formal education. He also released a publication named *On Education* in 1762 and describes in it an early childhood educational method with the hope of minimizing the obstacles of civilization and bringing man as near to nature as possible. He desires for a child to have no other guide than his own reason . Contrary to Locke, he does not rely on social expectations to train children. Rousseau contends that men can attain this freedom and independence of thought through naturalistic education. He believes education to come from three sources:"from nature, from men or from things". Like Locke, Rousseau also argued for an education where books were sparsely used (in early upbringing). The only book he recommended for Emile was *Robinson Crusoe*; which in his mind was a wonderful example of a natural education. Robinson Crusoe had nobody to teach him and he had to learn what worked by trial and error. However, in contrast to John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau states that men and women have very different roles to play and should therefore be educated differently. Women should please men and their education should ideally concentrate on the skills necessary to care for their husband, home and children.

To sum up, Locke's focus on reason and moral education is pitted against Rousseau's emphasis on the feelings and desires of the child. Locke argues that a comprehensive curriculum and books are vital whereas Rousseau advocates a natural upbringing ,far from society.

As a feminist writer before Feminism rose in full swirl, Jane Austen's perception of an ideal family unit is a reflection of the socio - political theories of John Locke.

Parenting During the Regency Period

Parenting in the Georgian era did not inhabit only the private sphere of home life. Then, as now, happy families were perceived as the bedrock of social stability. Raising numerous, healthy and socially responsible children fit to work and fight was seen as vital to maintaining the nation's growing empire and trade. Having multiple children was the answer to the fears of depopulation and national decline, following the disastrous opening to the Seven Years War, the loss of American Colonies and the French Revolution. Unfortunately family life was not always long and happy. It was disrupted by the death of parents as well as children. Various classes of the Regency England also had harsh parents and abandoned, abused children. The warfare around was breeding hardy manliness and a stricter division of gender codes. Jane Austen includes the flawed parent-child relationship in almost all her novels to reveal its far-reaching effects and alerts the reader to be aware of the ignorance and folly (on the part of both parent and child) causing all kinds of awkward situations which could potentially damage the reputation and the future of the person involved. But she is suitably cautious about the fact that good parenting also occurs and tender committed fatherhood (eg. Darcy as a father figure to Georgiana) had not disappeared.

Parenting in Fiction before Jane Austen

The eighteenth century novel is labelled as realistic novel where the settings are real geographical places and the novelists liked to write about ordinary people in real-life situations. Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and Lawrence Sterne are among the important novelists of the time. In

1719, Daniel Defoe published his *Robinson Crusoe* and suggested that a child's flight from paternal authority and protection is not a solution. His economic man established a new paternalistic state and the father-son relationship between Crusoe and Friday has been transposed as economic, political and social ideals. Twenty years later, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* or *Virtue Rewarded* develops a very interesting form of passive parenthood. It insists on the fact that even though outside the sphere of parental protection, the virtuous offspring should follow the moral principles of her parents in her quest for happiness. Pamela celebrates the middle- class value of chastity before marriage in opposition to the lasciviousness of the aristocracy.

Also, the 'conduct novel' with its emphasis on behaviour and marriageability targeted women readers in the eighteenth-century. Fanny Burney, writer of *Evelina,* is one of the most successful authors of her time. Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) is often considered either the 'Irish Jane Austen' or the 'female Sir Walter Scott'. Edgeworth's *"Letters for Literary Ladies"* is a plea for women's education-reform. She later collaborated with her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, on *Practical Education (1798)* and *Essays on Professional Education* (1809). These writings asserted that women educated in the use of reason would be better wives and mothers, a common idea among advocates of girls' schooling at the turn of the nineteenth century. Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801) is a novel of female education, which Jane Austen herself thought to be noteworthy. Feminism grew out of the revolutionary movements of the late eighteenth-century. Mary Wollstonecraft , who was the wife of the radical philosopher William Godwin and the mother of the novelist Mary Shelley, is generally regarded as the first English feminist author. In her *A vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792)* she advanced the philosophy of 'rational' female education for women to come out as social equals to men.

Jane Austen's concept of the ideal family unit reflects the process of social reform that took place during the late seventeenth and and early eighteenth centuries. The wave of change was led by writers who believed that the quality of family life was crucial to the quality of life in general. The happiness of the individual depends substantially on the well-being and proper functioning of the family as a unit.

The socio-political theories of John Locke produced widespread changes in the prevailing attitudes towards children and the role of parents in their upbringing.

These new beliefs contributed to the decline of the patriarchal family structure. This shift in the power structure of the family affected both parent-child and husband-wife relationships resulting in a more balanced and equitable distribution of power and autonomy within the family unit. Jane Austen's novels portray the period of transition between the two value systems and her viewpoint corresponds to the enlightened opinions of the social reformers.

Without exception , the process through which her heroines and their future husbands choose one another and the way they will function as marital partners follows the ideals set forth in the writings of English philosopher John Locke. Jane Austen's perception of character development and the influence of parents on their children also reflects the rise of science and Newton's discovery of universal laws of cause and effect.

Much of the conflict in Jane Austen's novels revolves around the debate over parental wishes versus personal choice and over money and social status versus marriage. She reveals the negative impact of a poor marriage (eg. *Pride and Prejudice*'s Bennet's couple) on the habits and dispositions of husband and wife. The most far reaching consequence of an unhappy marriage is the failure of husband and wife to perform their functions as good parents.

Parenting in Jane Austen's England

In the late eighteenth-century England the expression of parental love was shaped by cultural conventions. The social value of children was also affected by major economic transformations in society. The shift from a predominantly agricultural society economy to an industrialized one in the early nineteenth-century revolutionized cultural code of conduct. The families were bound together by economic necessity rather than emotions.

Although parenting is shared responsibility, mothers and fathers often care and provide for children differently, especially when the children are young. In the late eighteenth-century England, the family life was basically organized around gendered division of varied responsibilities. The care of children and the home was the primary role of mothers while the role of fathers was to provide for the family through their work. Fathers were expected to be good providers or 'breadwinners' and were not expected to spend much time with their children. They were the

family disciplinarians and were only sometimes available with kids for a little jesting before bedtime. Fathers did not do much in the way of childcare or house work. For fulfilling the needs of education. The boys and the girls in the middle class families were sent to petty schools, like a pre-school. However, only boys went to elementary school or grammar school while upper class girls were tutored. Some mothers taught their daughters at home until boarding school came into practice. These girls were often taught writing, music and needlework. The boys studied more academic subjects but girls were believed to only need to be taught subjects that were more on the line of abilities. The adolescent daughters of these families remained at home until they found a husband and were able to leave and have a family of their own. Even the oldest son of each family would stay at home as well in order to inherit the farm. The concept of inheritance in the late eighteenth-century England often caused arguments in these families and created tension between family members. Families of this time thus did not form close relationships and inheritance arguments were one of the main reasons for this.

Parenting in Jane Austen's Family

Jane Austen was the younger daughter of a Hampshire clergyman Reverend George Austen of the Steventon rectory and Cassandra Austen of the Leigh family. She was their seventh child and her sister Cassandra was her close companion and friend. Her father's house remained Jane Austen's abode for a quarter of a century. The Austen children all grew within a close- knit family, with Jane Austen herself forming an exceptional bond with her father.

Initially, for their education, Jane and Cassandra depended largely on their father and brothers. Reading occupied much of Jane's time; and that too sometimes aloud as a family entertainment. Jane Austen could herself sing , dance and play the piano. Mr. Austen fed her interest in writing by supplying his books, paper and writing tools to allow her to explore her creative side.

In 1801, the Austen family moved to Bath since George Austen had retired and had decided to settle there. It is believed that Jane Austen was at first unhappy about living there. Perhaps there is a bit of autobiography in *Persuasion*, where Jane Austen writes of Anne Elliot: "she disliked Bath, and did not think it agreed

with her—and Bath was to be her home." From Bath the family went on expeditions to various places, one of them being Lyme Regis, which is the setting of part of the story of *Persuasion*. As is said, it was on one of these expeditions to Lyme that Jane Austen rashly accepted a proposal of marriage and then changed her mind the very next day when she realized that she should not simply marry for worldly motives and without love. She hardly wrote anything during the period her family lived in Bath. Her interest in writing seems to have revived after the family moved to Chawton after her father's death. Except for *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* all her earlier novels were published anonymously.

Parenting in Jane Austen's Novels

In my study, good and the inadequate parenting and its effects would be thoroughly examined in the six novels of Jane Austen. *Pride and Prejudice* includes Mr. and Mrs. Bennet as parents of their five young daughters. Being an innately foolish and garrulous woman, Mrs. Bennet is always urging her daughters to marry and goes to considerable lengths to ensure that her schemes will work. Mrs. Bennet possesses numerous follies as her characteristic trait. Her daughters Elizabeth and Jane, however, manage to escape from her devastating influence and turn themselves into decent adults. In contrast, Lydia, who is known as "always unguarded and often uncivil" (P86), leads the family nearly to the pit of disgrace later in the novel. Mrs. Bennet prefers one daughter over the other when it comes to marrying them off. Elizabeth is the least dear to her of all her children. The marriage plans Mrs. Bennet makes for Elizabeth are business- like when she plans to give her away in marriage to Mr. Collins. Jane Austen seems to have created Mrs. Bennet as a person who does not think about the consequences of her behaviour. But Mrs. Bennet's stupidity and careless parenting is revealed most in the Lydia-Wickham episode. Mr. Bennet too is depicted as a negligent father . He has developed an attitude of detached irony towards his family. He derives great pleasure from his witticisms at the expense of his wife and three foolish daughters. He realizes that of all his daughters, Elizabeth is the only one endowed with real strength of mind and character. Elizabeth feels grateful to him for his affection for herself, but she is never blind to the impropriety and inadequacy of his behaviour as a husband and as a father. It is clear that Mr. Bennet is willing to buy personal peace even at the cost of family honour.

In *Mansfield Park*, with the exception of Edmund, all Bertram children become spoilt because of not getting proper education and also inadequate parenting. Early in the novel , it is known that Lady Bertram did not pay the smallest attention to the education and proper upbringing of her daughters. Here fits a famous quote of Jane Austen "Give a girl an education and introduce her properly into the world, and ten to one but she has the means of settling well, without further expense to anybody."

Lady Bertram's sister Mrs. Norris is actually a wrong kind of instructress. With all their promising talents, Maria and Julia are entirely deficient in the qualities of "self-knowledge, generosity and humility." Sir Thomas Bertram realizes too late that something was wanting because though a truly anxious father he is not outwardly affectionate. The reserve of his manner repressed all the flow of the girls' spirits before him. He fails to establish a close understanding between himself and his children.

The Price family is not rich. It is one of the great ironies of this novel that a home which is so comfortless produces children of such admirable qualities as William, Fanny and Susan. When Sir Thomas contemplates this, he recognizes the advantages of early hardship, discipline and consciousness of being born to struggle.

In *Persuasion,* faulty parenting can be witnessed on Sir Walter Elliot's part since he values his daughters only for what they contribute to his sense of vanity. He only appreciates his eldest daughter Elizabeth because she takes after him both in looks and ambitions. He discourages Anne's inclination to marry Captain Wentworth earlier probably because of his inability to provide her with the dowry needed. The only time Sir Walter is interested in Anne's interests and acquaintances is when she does something that interferes with his own ambitions. Lady Russell is seen as the role model of a mother figure for Anne Elliot. She steps in as a surrogate mother after the death of Lady Elliot. She is genuinely concerned and pained about the way Sir Walter and Elizabeth treat Anne. Still she has committed an error that the reader sees fit to criticize her because it clouds her judgment in deciding what is best for Anne. She persuades Anne to decline Captain Wentworth's first offer of marriage and encourages her to get interested in marrying Mr. William Elliot, the heir to Kellynch-Hall. Nevertheless Lady Russell

does seem to have a better grasp of what it means to be a mother than both Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Bertram.

In *Emma* Mr. Woodhouse is depicted as an affectionate, indulgent father who is over-fond of both his daughters, Isabella and Emma. An invalid, Mr. Woodhouse is not seen as a clever man. Ironically, Emma has to take care both of her father and the invited guests at his dinner-parties. Thinking herself to be a responsible person, ironically she turns out to be a snobbish young woman. In reality Mr. Knightley fulfills the role of a father figure throughout the novel. Mr. Knightley is" one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them."(Ch1,Pg8) When the novel opens we find him taking paternal interest in her welfare although he becomes her life partner at the end. He keeps a close watch upon Emma and tries to analyse almost everything she does. Emma acts as a mistress of the house . Mr. Knightley says about her mother " Emma lost the only person able to cope up with her ." (Pg,23) The above lines show how a mother's role is indispensable to a child's proper growth .Basically the underlying theme of this novel is the education of Emma herself. Although the recurrent irony is that Emma who must become a pupil insists on becoming a teacher. Her mismanagement of the affairs of Harriet and of the consequent difficulties to nearly every character in the novel and to herself as well all come out of Emma's confusions about these two roles. She is seen as a girl absolutely self-deceived who can be checked only by a personality like Mr. Knightley. Mr. Knightley makes Emma realize her faulty decisions regarding others' lives and shows her the mirror of reality. Through all Emma's self-deceptions it's Mr. knightley's corrective presence that stops her from doing anything seriously wrong.

In the novel *Sense and Sensibility* John Dashwood appears as an unjust father figure in the opening pages. He is delineated by the author as a henpecked husband completely vanquished by his wife's logic. But Mrs. Dashwood appears as a compassionate mother to the three sisters, Elinor, Marianne and Margaret. Instead of being a guiding figure, ironically she herself more often needs the advice of her elder daughter Elinor in taking important decisions and also seeks emotional support from her. Elinor has a strength of understanding and a coolness of judgement in which Mrs. Dashwood is lacking. Mrs. Dashwood resembles her younger daughter Marianne in being uncontrollable during emotional distress.

Elinor in fact takes on the role of a mentor in difficult situations. Another mother in the novel ,Mrs. Ferrars, is the most possessive kind of mother. She is autocratic and perverse in her attitude towards her children. With Fanny she has some affinity but for her sons she is seen as selfish, cold-hearted and designing. Mrs. Jennings as a mother deserves some admiration. Her nature matches well with her elder son-in-law Sir John Middleton.

In *Northanger Abbey* Catherine's parents Mr. and Mrs. Morland play only a minor role. They are depicted as warm, loving and eager to provide for their children within their limited means. They allow James and Catherine to go away for long stretches of time, but they also want their children to appreciate their life at home. This is why Mrs. Morland urges Catherine to adapt quickly to her normal routine after she returns from Bath. The Morland parents are definitely in contrast to the other father of the novel, General Tilney. He is a domineering father due to which Henry and Eleanor do not fully express themselves in his presence. We are led to believe that general Tilney's temper has worsened over the years; perhaps due to the death of his wife. He wants his children to become the models of genteel propriety. This is demonstrated when he becomes so amenable after Miss Tilney marries a nobleman. General Tilney is also a unique portrait of an uncomprehending parent. His children know well that taking marital decisions is impossible unless their father's mercenary motives are being fulfilled. But the author permits Henry to rebel against his father's wishes and marry the girl of his choice. General Tilney no doubt plays a vicious role in the story but proves to be an important factor behind Catherine Morland's education in life.

Jane Austen's study of character, both male and female, is remarkable. She,however, has a greater insight into her female characters. The role of parenthood delineated in the novels of Jane Austen is true to life. An array of parents depicted in her novels largely play a conscious role in the betterment of their children. Such prototypes are to be found at all social levels and at all times. But in Jane Austen's fiction we also see children maturing even through the gap caused by inadequate parenting.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jane Austen and Children by David Selwyn opens with a description of the birth practices in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, and portrays the life of a new mother and a growing child. He examines the world of children - their clothes, toys, games as well as their punishments, and relationships with other children. The author ponders over the life as seen through Austen's characters and Jane Austen herself. The account of the relationships Jane Austen enjoyed with her nieces and nephews is particularly appealing. There is also an analysis of the bond between Fanny Price and her brother William in contrast with that of Anne Elliot and her insipid sister Elizabeth. The writer also explores notably into the role and life of a governess. Although I have studied a few chapters of this book, I find it has added to my knowledge of family dynamics with regard to Jane Austen's fiction.

Family Relationships in the Novels of Jane Austen by Paula Bennet explores the concept of the ideal family unit and also reflects upon the social reforms that took place during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The writer talks about the socio-political theories of John Locke, which discuss the role of parents in a child's upbringing and the prevailing attitudes towards the children. Chapter One discusses Jane Austen's view of family relations in the light of the socio-political theories evolved earlier. Chapter Two focuses on how adult supervision and personal freedom are maintained in Jane Austen's novels. The lack of competent parental guidance is a major source of adversity for both her protagonists and her antagonists.

Jane Austen's Families, a book by June Sturrock, focuses on family dynamics in Jane Austen's six novels. Ethics of parenthood are discussed in the first section of the book. Furthermore, the ethics the heroines acquire from their parents through adaption or imitation are studied thoroughly. The chapter "Spoilt Children" analyses the father – daughter relationships in *Mansfield Park, Emma* and *Persuasion.*The author also discusses the role of parents in influencing how children act, think and feel. She explores the various inter- familial relations: those between sisters, between mothers and daughters, and between fathers and daughters. I find this book presenting a great insight into the different relationships

between characters in Jane Austen's novels, although I have gone through only a part of this book till now.

The essay "Mothers, Substitute Mothers, and Daughters in the Novels of Jane Austen" by Mary Margaret Benson examines the novels of Jane Austen with regard to the mothers and substitute mothers.The essayist views Jane Austen's representations of the mother – daughter relationships and also considers her views of marriage and family as a whole. She cites Virginia Wolf's *A Room of One's Own* saying " We think back through our mothers if we are women (132). As women we are all interested in our mothers as women. We define ourselves and our values in terms of our mothers, and even if we ultimately reject our mothers' values, that very rejection is a major aspect of our personal definitions." The essayist asserts that in Jane Austen's time mothers were responsible for their children's early education even more than today. Such education included moral education – the word 'moral'is used in the broadest possible sense. Jane Austen follows the tradition of eighteenth century writers from Locke to Richardson in placing a high value on the development of morality. The early education neglected in the characters of Emma and Catherine Morland is acquired as they reach maturity. Thus the essay presents a strong view that the Austen heroine must have her personal sense of morality well established before she grows up and becomes a mother herself. I find this essay to be of great relevance to the study of the moral attitudes of Jane Austen's heroines.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My research methodology would consist of close reading of the primary sources. I will also support my study with a significant number of secondary sources which deal with the subject of parenthood and parenting styles in general and in prose fiction in particular. I will also consider the role of surrogate parents or guardians who are no less carers than family members in Jane Austen's novels.

TENTATIVE CHAPTER PLAN

1. Introduction : The first chapter would include a detailed study of the 'Theories of Parenting' evolved during late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They would throw light upon and acquaint us with the different types of parenting styles used within the society then. Furthermore, parenting in general during the Regency period would be examined. Parenting in fiction before Jane Austen would also be discussed in my study.

2. Parenting in *Pride and Prejudice:* This chapter would include my study of the Bennet couple in the light of parenthood. I would also analyse the characters of Mr. Darcy, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner as surrogate parents.

3. 3.Parenting in *Mansfield Park*: In this chapter I would examine the roles of Mr. and Mrs. Bertram as parents. Regardless of the negligence in the parenting of Price couple, their children turn out to be better individuals. The reasons behind it would be studied.

4. Parenting in *Emma*:- In this chapter Mr. Woodhouse's role as a father would be evaluated. Mr. Knightley eventually marries Emma in the end but his role would be analysed as of a caretaker or a substitute parent guiding Emma all-through the novel.

5. Parenting in *Sense and Sensibility* :- In this chapter I would examine the role of Mrs. Dashwood as a mother. Elinor's role as a substitute for a parent would also be studied. Mrs. Ferrars' role as a mother would also be examined in my study.

6. Role of parenting in *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*:- In this chapter I would study the parenting of Sir Walter Elliot and General Tilney. Also the character of Lady Russell would be studied as a surrogate mother. The Morland couple's role would analysed in my extensive study.

7. Conclusion: The last chapter would sum up my assessment of an array of parent- child relationships and the role of parenting in Jane Austen's novels. The far – reaching effects of good and the bad parenting would be considered in Jane Austen's novels.

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